

HELLO AGAIN

VOL 17 NO. 3

MAY-JUN 1986

A PERSONAL NOTE: I am looking for a copy of "Forgive my Heart" by Nat King Cole for a friend of mine. It was from his "To Whom it May Concern" album.

CONVENTION '86: Reservations have begun to come in for our 11th annual convention Oct. 24th & 25th. Dealer tables are limited to 44 so let me know as soon as possible. They are \$25 each plus registration fees. An invitation has been sent to Willard Waterman. Also a re-creation of Your Hit Parade is being considered. TOM DELONG, author of "The Mighty Music Box," will be helping to coordinate this project. Bea Wain and Andre Baruch will be invited along with other alumni...All pertinent information was in last issue of HA. Prices for ads were in last issue of HA. Ads should be in by August first. Remember to let me know about hotel rooms when you send in registration.

CONVENTION '85: KEN PILETIC, 705 South Oltendorf Rd, Streamwood, IL 60103 has the video tapes ready. Send him a SASE for details. If you want the complete convention on 3 video tapes, you can send Ken \$51..JOE WEBB is not doing the audio tapes. Send a SASE for details to BOB BURNHAM, Box 39522, Redford, MI 48239. Bob is doing them and is not sure whether 3 or 4 tapes will be required.

RADIO IS ALIVE AND WELL: DON MacLAUGHLIN celebrated his 30th year on As The World Turns April 2nd and 3rd with his 50th wedding anniversary as Chris Hughes...DICK OSGOOD received the Governor's Award for 1986 from the Detroit Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences on May 3rd. It is given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the history of television in the Detroit area. Congratulations!...A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION, on since 1978, was televised April 26 in celebration of the grand opening if the newly renovated St. Paul World Theater. Garrison Keiller's book has sold over 1 million copies hard cover so far...The May 11th issue of the Chicago Tribune has an article about Everett Mitchell, for many years host of the NATIONAL FARM AND HOME HOUR. Mitchell is 88 and lives in Wheaton, IL...THE WORLD OF RELIGION switched from 20 years on CBS radio to the Associated Press. It will now be produced by KMOX-AM St. Louis.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED: NOSTALGIA DIGEST; Apr-May; articles on Fred Allen and Dick Jurgens...June-July; article on Florence Halop...SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM; Mar; articles on Dick Joy, Eve Arden, follow up to Dave Easter's article on using video tape for audio tape...Apr; articles about researching the Lone Ranger Log by Terry Salomonson; Elliott Reid; radio comedians by Frank Bresee...May; article on Charles Flynn...METRO WASHINGTON OTR CLUB newsletter; Mar-Apr; article on Arthur Peterson...SOUNDS OF YESTERDAY; issue #3; articles on the Hummerts; a look back at the CBS Radio Mystery Theater; a log of Baker's Broadcast with Joe Penner (10/8/33-6/23/35). Paul Anderson, editor, has copies of many scripts for sale.

BOOKS and MAGAZINES: Jeff Abraham, 935 Sunset Ave, Venice, CA 90291 is working on a book about the Ritz Bros. and would like any tapes or other items relating to them.

{} If box is checked, \$10 is due for another year.

CLUBS and CONVENTIONS: The 10th annual Golden Age of Radio Reunion Festival will be held June 27-29 at Sportsmans Park, Rose Garden Building, Shenandoah, IA. Its emphasis is on country and western. The highlight of the show is the Saturday afternoon COUNTRY SCHOOL. This program was on from 1929-1942. Contact Nadine Dreager, 8 Gayland Dr, Council Bluffs, IA 51501 for details...The second annual National Lum and Abner Society Convention will be held June 14-15 in Pine Ridge, Ark. For details send a SASE to Tim Hollis, Rt 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062.

A NEW PUBLICATION: I still welcome any updates on my log of circulating shows. The log is still available for \$17.50.

LOGS: PHIL EVANS has prepared a listing of all 152 available Abbott and Costello. It is arranged chronologically. It is available from me for \$1.00 which will cover copying and mailing.

NEW SHOWS AND CATALOGS: Don Aston, 1301 No. Park Ave, Inglewood, CA 90302 has all but 15 of the total of 481 GUNSMOKE broadcast. These shows are on 41 reels in chronological order. Most have at least very good sound. All 41 reels can be purchased for \$500 plus \$30 shipping. Also his latest supplement is out with new BENNY, WHISTLER, DRAGNET.

YOU AND THE LAW: Sen. Charles Mathias (R-MD) is sponsoring a controversial audiotape-tax bill which would levy a five-cents-PER-MINUTE tax on audiotape and additional taxes on most audiotape decks. The article mentions the ramifications to the videotape business BUT it could spell disaster to the OTR hobby. If you feel this way, perhaps a letter to your congressman is in order. Also you can write to the Audio Recording Rights Coalition, Box 33705, 1145 19th St NW, Washington, DC 20033. For more information call 1-800-282-TAPE.

NEW ADDRESSES: BOB CONE, Box 14-305, Omaha, NE 68114...LARRY VALLEY, 305 E Montana, St. Paul, MN 55101

NEW FRIENDS AND RETURNEES: DOUG BROWN, 409 Louisiana Ave, Cumberland, MD 21502...JAN WILLIS, 621 Allen St, Tupelo, MS 38801...JED DOLNICK, 525 Juniper Ct, West Bend, WI 53095. Jed's program "The Sounds of Yesterday" celebrated its 12th birthday in April. It is on WYMS-FM (89) Milwaukee, Sundays 8:00 A.M...TOM DOOLEY, 20880 Prospect Rd, Saratoga, CA 95070...FRITZ RITTERSPACH, 6515 Jackson Dr, San Diego, CA 92119...STEVE SZEJNA, 3334 S 15th St, Milwaukee, WI 53215...DR. WILLIAM HARPER, 607 Robinson St, West Lafayette, IN 47906 is writing a book about (Henry) Grantland Rice, the American sportswriter and wants any radio tapes in which he appeared such as Cities Service Concerts, Information Please, others...BOB MOLLEUR, 29 Kennedy Dr, North Chelmsford, MA 01863...ED DRUMM, 19 Brook Rd, Enfield, CT 06082...HAL LAYER, AV-S F State Un., 1600 Holloway St, San Francisco, CA 94132...DAVID BRADLEY, 111 Overbrook Dr, Stamford, CT 06906; wants all info and tapes of BOLD VENTURE and any other Bogart show...STAN HESTER, Box 244, Milford, MI 48042 is doing a bio-discography of Red Nichols and would like any information, especially his radio broadcasts.

GENE SOUCEK, 92 Leo St, Edison, NJ 08817 wants a copy of THE BIG BROADCAST...ROBERT KINEL, 15437 Parkwood SMT, Monroe, MI 48161... ROBIN NILON, 8611 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19118 is searching for the writings of David Goodis, a Philadelphian. He wrote several novels, screenplays, many short stories under his own name or various pseudonyms for

pulp adventure magazines, and is alleged to have written radio scripts. If anyone has copies of any of his works, please contact Robin...JOHN KLINE, Box 236, Reamstown, PA 17567...JIM BLYTHE, 941 Redding Rd, Asheboro, NC 27203. Jim and I go back to 1973...SHEL WALLMAN, 70 W 95 St, NYC, NY 10025 wants any tapes of Brooklyn Dodger baseball games with Red Barber; also pre-game warm up show and post-game Sports Extra...PHIL KINE, 931-236TH PL SW, Bothell, WA 98021 wants any Shadow material including radio shows, pulp books, premiums...THEODORE HANNAH, 11106 Bybee St, Silver Spring, MD 20902 wants information about General Shafter Parker and his Circus, heard, he believes, on Mutual from Los Angeles.

DURELL (DUIE) ROTH, 2704 Cherry Ln, Austin, TX 78703; wants to start an OTR club in the Austin area. If interested, please contact him.

OLD FRIENDS: LEE MUNSICK, 20 Harriet Dr, Whippny, NJ 07921 is going to start running mail auctions of records (cylinders to 45's), tapes, films (16mm, 8mm, 35mm), piano rolls. Lee is still looking for any Arthur Godfrey and Friends memorabilia especially records with picture sleeves, videos, films, etc...JOHN BARBER, 1807 1/2, Burgundy, New Orleans, LA 70116 has two old books which he will xerox for anyone: AMOS AND ANDY by Correll and Gosden, 1931 (a series of 25 A & A sketches) and CHARLIE McCARTHY - SO HELP ME, BERGEN by Eleanor Parker, 1938 (a series of Charlie's early adventures). The cost of the first is \$14 and the second is \$7...DALE HILK, 424 E 1st St, Waconia, MN 55387 is looking for Jack Armstrong 15-minute episodes from Jan 13, 1947-Apr 18, 1947...TOM HEATHWOOD, 22 Broadlawn Pk, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 wants United States Steel Hour "1984" and Lights Out "The Dark" and "Chicken Heart." He will send a list of classical music ET's for sale for a SASE. Some are quite rare...NAT BERMAN, 175 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11238 interested in trading Jack Benny and Amos & Andy tv shows on video cassette, Beta format only...ROY HOOPER said he had a list of uncirculated discs for a SASE. I and several other people sent a SASE but received nothing. I wrote a letter to Roy but never heard from him. He recently subscribed to HA. Can anyone help?

IN FOND MEMORY: LAWRENCE SALERNO, Mar 16, 86; former singer for WGN radio...JAMES CAGNEY, Mar 30, 86; versatile actor; appeared on 5 LUX and 2 SUSPENSE...HARRY RITZ, Mar 29, 78; last of the Ritz Bros...JOHN DOUGHERTY, Mar 20, 70; Catholic Bishop; started hosting THE CATHOLIC HOUR in 1946...BARTLETT ROBINSON, Mar 26, 73; film and radio actor (Perry Mason, many others)...WALTER COLBATH, Mar 24, 80; radio actor (article lists Jack Armstrong and Harold Teen but not listed in reference books)...HOWARD HARRIS, Mar 22, 74; comedy writer (Amazing Mr. Smith)...HY FREEDMAN, Mar 31, 71; comedy writer (You Bet Your Life)...ALVIN CHILDRESS, Apr 19, 78; Amos on the Amos 'N' Andy tv series...ARTHUR HAYES, Apr 14, 81; president of CBS radio from 1955-67...BRODERICK CRAWFORD, Apr 26, 74; appeared in one LUX (Wake Island) and 3 SUSPENSE...ANNE RAY FRANK, Apr 1; writer (Meet Corliss Archer, Dinah Shore)...RALPH GOODMAN, Apr 20, 68; tv and radio writer (Duffy's Tavern, F M & Molly)...ANN GOLENPAUL, May 9, 79; co-producer of radio quiz program, Information Please...MARTIN GABEL, May 22, 73; member of Mercury Theater group.

\* \* \*

JAY HICKERSON, Box C, Orange, CT 06477 (203) 248-2887; 795-6261 \$10/year

# Way We Were

A look at Chicago's past / By George Estep

## A beautiful day in the history of Chicago radio

**M**ay 14, 1932, is a historic date in Chicago for reasons best known to Everett Mitchell. There was indeed major news made that day: A massive sea and air search for the kidnapers of the Lindbergh baby dominated the headlines. Judge John H. Lyle announced he was forming a new organization, the Cook County Republican Party, "to battle for honest elections." Students were arrested for picketing the Lake Shore Drive home of Samuel Insull because of the alleged mistreatment of coal miners on his properties. And the Cubs lost, 7-6, after a ninth-inning rally by the Boston Braves.

But for Mitchell the making of history began that day on a commuter train to the city. He was en route to the Merchandise Mart, Studio D, on the 19th floor, where he was host of the popular widely broadcast "National Farm and Home Hour" originating at NBC's WMAQ.

"It was raining and misting. It was in the depths of the Depression," recalls Mitchell, 88, who lives in Wheaton. "A fellow on the train was complaining about the weather and hard times. He said, 'As far as this nation is concerned, we're doomed. God has forsaken us.'

"And I said, 'No, we've forsaken God to worship the almighty dollar.' The conversation stayed with me all the way to work. I kept thinking what a beautiful day it was, even in the mist and the rain. I had two feet to walk to work and I had two eyes to see the sun rise and set. Even that day there was an occasional small patch of blue in the sky. I had always heard if there was enough blue in the sky to patch a Dutchman's pants, it would be a good day."

Mitchell went on the air, and in place of the usual opening lines he burst out, "It's a beautiful day in Chicago!" He hit the *beautiful* hard. Everyone in the studio thought he had slipped a cog. "After the show, a network vice president called me in and asked me what I thought I was doing," Mitchell recounts. "I started to tell him about the conversation on the train, when the phone rang. He told me to answer it. It was a man from Boston who had heard the beautiful-day line and asked me to keep on saying it. The next day the station got 13,000 calls and letters about the line. The vice president finally told me to keep using it."

The identifying line became so famous—perhaps in part because of Mitchell's rich baritone [he had started in radio as a singer]—that it almost became a cliché.

Mitchell says an acquaintance told him about an incident during World War II, when, as GIs slogged hip-deep in mud, one of them said, "But it's a beautiful day in Chicago!"—bringing a degree of cheer to that bleak situation.

"After the opening line, he [Mitchell] would kind of temper it and tell you what the actual weather was," says Al Osterhoff, a former studio engineer who worked with Mitchell for 20 years. "Maybe he'd say, 'Well, it's raining, and it's 40 degrees,' or something like that. But he was always sort of an optimist. He was a pretty conservative person, not at all flamboyant except in spots where the show called for it."

Mitchell took on the "Farm and Home Hour" in 1928 and became broadcasting's *de facto* expert on agriculture. According to Richard Crabb, author of "Radio's Beautiful Day," about Mitchell, the radio host was "sounded out by [President Franklin] Roosevelt to become secretary of agriculture during the New Deal. But he turned it down. He realized his field was in communications and he never swerved from it for 30 years." His mellifluous voice became an institution on radio. "You knew it was Mitchell whether he was introduced or not," Crabb says.

During the '40s the "beautiful day" line was turned into a song, with lyrics by Mitchell, and was played by the 35-piece Farm and Home Orchestra at the beginning of the show, Crabb says.

In 1955 Mitchell bought a farm in Wheaton and became a farmer himself. Its name, of course, was Beautiful Day Farm.

During the '50s, the program underwent several changes. It went local, was renamed "Farm Forum," aired on radio in the morning and eventually was incorporated into a "Town and Farm" TV program that followed the "Tonight Show." Mitchell retired in 1967 and was succeeded by Jerry Mitchell [no relation], now a program host at WAIT.

Mitchell once told an interviewer about a broadcast that really taxed his optimism. He was doing the show live from the "Golden Grain and Water Festival"—so named by the courageous citizens of Valley City, N.D., even though their community was so hard hit by drought that they were down to only one field of grain and one stream.

The night before the broadcast a hailstorm destroyed the grain field and the beautiful floats the farmers had prepared for the festival. Reluctant to broadcast the effects of this final insult from nature, Mitchell took the mike, closed his eyes and described to his radio audience the scene as he remembered it before the storm struck. It was a beautiful day in Valley City. ■



Everett Mitchell in 1937: An optimistic voice during the depths of the Depression.

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-George Wagner, Vice-President (former President) Cincinnati OTR Club, co-editor, OLD TIME RADIO DIGEST.

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-Steve Doiter, OTR Collector.

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All Good Wishes in Old Time Radio,

*Paul F. Anderson, editor*

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(All logs & timelines C 1980 Tom Price)

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Segments of Smackout recorded on 12" alum discs at WMAQ (30m) June 1931  
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#1 FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY PGM PREMIERE et al, dubbed from Jordan's NBC Ref. Recordings, 2-33 1/3 discs (30m) 4-16-35

#3 FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY PGM "Hot Dogs & A Blowout". From NY, dubbed from agency discs, 6-78rpms (30m) 4-30-35

#3 FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY PGM et al, dubbed from Jordan's NBC Ref. Recordings, 2-33 1/3 discs (30m) 4-30-35

FM & M CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BANQUET at Grace Hayes Lodge, NBC Ref. Rec, 3-78rpms (15m) 1-31-41

VOCALS BY MARIAN & JIM JORDAN "Stop your Tickling Me" (Marian) '34 "Chasing Rainbows" (Jim) '45 "Ragedy Ann" (Marian) '51

SCREEN GULF SHOW w/FM & M in "McGee's Movie Contract", 7-78rpms (30m) 3-09-41

SILENCE MEANS SECURITY - Special FM & M for AFRS (12m) 1943

KALTENMEYER'S KINDERGARTEN excerpt from NBC's "Recol at 30" (6m) 1956 (this last not a disc record.)

REEL A-2, 1200', JIM JORDAN DISCS

(NBC D-DAY COVERAGE w/pgms before, during & after FM & M)

NBC D-DAY COVERAGE (WEAF, NY) 6-06-44  
 #407 FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY PGM

"Invasion of Europe" (30m) 6-06-44

NBC D-DAY COVERAGE (WEAF, NY) 6-06-44

THE BOB HOPE SHOW (WEAF, NY) 6-06-44

FRED WARING & THE PENN. 6-06-44

THE RED SKELTON PGM (FM & M come to the mike, record stops!) 6-06-44

TRIBUTE TO FDR Pts 1-25 compl (13 discs) w/FM & M, Teeny & many many more (120m) 4-15-45

REEL A-3, 1200', JIM JORDAN DISCS

RENDEVOUS WITH DESTINY: AN NBC DOCUMENTARY BASED ON RADIO ADDRESSES OF FDR

From 12 discs @78rpm (120m) April 1946 SONG BY MJ & THE KING'S MEN - "Twas The Night Before Christmas" 1-78rpm (5m) 12-22-42

FROM THE PACIFIC - not w/M & JJ, NBC Ref. Recording (has a McGee at the mike!) 3-78rpm discs Ca. 1945

BING CROSBY SHOW w/FM & M (30m) 4-14-48

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY SPECIALS

GUEST STAR # 10	(15m)	6-22-47
GUEST STAR # 65	(15m)	6-20-48
GUEST STAR #131	(15m)	9-25-49
HERE'S TO VETERANS #76	(15m)	1-31-48

REEL A-4, 1200', JIM JORDAN DISCS

THE TRIUMPHANT HOUR w/M & JJ 7 others, (60m) 4-17-49

15th ANNIVERSARY JOHNSON'S WAX SPECIAL FOR FM & M w/FM & m 7 many others, (60m) 9-13-49

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY/PET MILK PROMO DISC 1-78rpm, 1 side (4½m) sum 1950

SONGS BY THE KING'S MEN - "Rounds & Jingles" album 3-78rpm (18m) Late 40's

SONGS BY FRED WARING & THE PENNSYLVANIANS "...Night Before Xmas" by Darby "White Christmas" - not McGee

NBC SILVER JUBILEE SHOW w/FM & M celeb NBC's 25th (1st 30 of 120m pgm) 12-15-51

NBC JUBILEE cont. - 2nd 30m of 120m pgm - last 60m missing - 51

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY XMAS SEAL PGM FOR 1951 (15m) Dec. 1951

V-DISCS 1st one has FM & M intro for Marie Greene, "The Man I Love" #613; 2nd by Martha Tilton & 3rd by F Waring WWII

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